

Andrew Jackson to Benjamin Chew Howard, August 2, 1838, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL BENJAMIN C. HOWARD.¹

1 Draft.

Hermitage, August 2, 1838.

my dear sir, I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter of the 23rd ultimo, and sincerely thank you for your kind interposition to free me from the reckless and unfounded charge of duplicity, brought against me by Mr. Adams. In the course he has pursued he has proved one fact, that he delights more in falshood, than in truth, or he would have inquired of Mr. Fulton, then in the senate, whether he had received such letter from me, and acted under it. Mr. Fultons reply would have prevented him from the disgrace of producing *a confidential letter* which he must have known had been purloined from it being marked *confidential*, and shielded Mr. Adams from the disgrace of being the associate of burglars, or purloiners, which he has proved himself to be, by producing the stolen letter.

Mr. Adams has placed himself before the world in a very disgraceful attitude, and it really appears to me that there is nothing too base for some of the opposition to stoop to, when they think it will lessen the character of the late, or present, administration. I have (by letter) called upon Mr. Adams for my letter, and for information how he came by it, that the burglar or purloiner, may be dealt with as the law may direct. I am awaiting his answer. You ask to be informed, "Whether I ever permitted a copy of this letter to be taken. I answer I never did, no person except my private secretary, the Secretary of War, and

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Secretary of State, ever saw or read it, until it reached Mr. Fulton to whom it was written, with my knowledge.

Feeling at that time great anxiety to maintain in good faith a strict neutrality with Mexico as we had hitherto done with all nations, it is probable that the letter was sent to Mr. Fulton in duplicate, by different mails. As we could not act efficiently on mere rumors, the object was to obtain proof of the fact of a force being about to be organized within our limits to make war upon a neighbouring nation with whom we were at peace—this was necessary before we could take any official and energetic steps in the case, and the reason which give rise to the letter to Mr. Fulton in whose fidelity every confidence was reposed. But whether in duplicate or not the letter must have been purloined as I have searched for the original draft, and have had the State and War Departments looked into, for it, and the report of Mr. Fulton which was filed with the original letter on its receipt, and can find neither, therefore I conclude, that the letter which Mr. Adams has is the original draft with which the report of Judge Fulton was filed, and that he has in his possession or knowledge Mr. Fulton's report to me which went to shew the rumors were all groundless, and that Genl Houston had settled in Texas and was practising law there for a livelihood. So soon as I receive Mr. Adams' reply I mean to have this matter fully enquired into—my letter must have reached him about this time. . . .

[*Indorsement:*] rough draft of a copy of a letter in reply to Col. B. C. Howard of Baltimore of 23rd July 1838, the letter sent differing somewhat in the phraseology from the within but in substance the same. A.J.